Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SECTO 04128 231855Z

44
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
---------- 092683
Z O 231830Z FEB 76 ZFF4
FM USDEL SECRETARY IN BOGOTA
TO AMEMBASSY RABAT FLASH
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTO 4128

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT FOR ATHERTON

EO11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR SS MO SS
SUBJ: PROPOSED ATHERTON VISIT TO MOROCCO AND ALGERIA

REF: RABAT 0983 (REPEATED AS TOSEC 040203)

1. I WANT TO CORRECT PERSPECTIVE IN WHICH ATHERTON TRIP IS BEING VIEWED. TRIP SHOULD BE PRESENTED WITH FOLLOWING CLEARLY IN MIND:

A. THIS IS NOT REPEAT NOT A TRIP TO GET U.S. INTO MEDIATING ROLE ON SAHARA ISSUE. IT MUST NOT REPEAT NOT BE PRESENTED PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY MAINLY AS A SAHARA-RELATED TRIP.

B. THE FACTS ARE THAT UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN SCHEDULED TO VISIT ALGIERS FOR REVIEW OF A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC ISSUES. ATHERTON IS JOINING ROBINSON TO PERMIT FULL REVIEW OF ALL ISSUES OF COMMON INTEREST TO U.S. AND ALGERIA. HE WILL EXPLAIN CURRENT STATE OF MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS AND HOW WE PLAN TO PROCEED, AND ALGERIANS HAVE INDICATED THEY WANT TO DISCUSS THE SAHARA. OUR INTEREST IN DISCUSSING SAHARA IS TO MAKE CLEAR TO BOUMEDIENE THAT WE HAVE NOT, AS HIS CONFIDANT SUGGESTED, BEEN WORKING AGAINST ALGERIA IN SAHARA CONTEXT OR USING
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PAGE 02 SECTO 04128 231855Z

THAT ISSUE TO DIVERT ALGERIA FROM ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUES. IN SHORT,

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

WHAT ATHERTON WILL BE RESPONDING TO IS INDICATION BOUMEDIENE BELIEVES THAT U.S. POLICY TOWARD ALGERIA HAS CHANGED AND THAT WE ARE LESS CONCERNED WITH STRONG U.S.-ALGERIAN RELATIONSHIP THAN WE HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST.

C. IN THAT CONTEXT AND IN THAT CONTEXT ONLY WE FELT ATHERTON COULD NOT GO TO ALGIERS WITHOUT ALSO STOPPING IN MOROCCO. SINCE WE WISH TO AVOID INTERFERING IN SAHARA ISSUE, VISIT TO MOROCCO MUST BE SIMILARLY DESCRIBED AS ONE OF OUR PERIODIC REVIEWS OF REGIONAL SITUATION, WITH IMPORTANT EMPHASIS ON MIDDLE EAST AND BILATERAL ISSUES AND WITH EXPECTATION SAHARA ISSUE WOULD ARISE.

2. SINCE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ATHERTON JOIN ROBINSON IN ALGIERS FOR WHAT IS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT, I BELIEVE HE SHOULD PLAN TO STOP IN RABAT PROVIDED MOROCCANS WANT HIM TO. IT SHOULD BE MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT SAHARA ISSUE WILL CONTINUE TO BE DEALT WITH THROUGH ALREADY ESTABLISHED UN AND ARAB CHANNELS. MOROCCANS SHOULD BE GIVEN CLEAR CHOICE WHETHER THEY WANT ATHERTON TO COME OR NOT AND WHETHER BEFORE OR AFTER ATHERTON'S VISIT TO ALGIERS.
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